

PS

3505

095855

1916

SINGING FIRES
OF ERIN

By

ELEANOR ROGERS COX



Class PS3505

Book . 095855

Copyright N^o 1916

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN



From "Celtic Romances"

SABA COMES TO FINN

SIN SIN'S FIRES OF ERIN

By ELEANOR ROGERS COX
DESIGNS BY JOHN P. CAMPBELL



New York · JOHN LANE COMPANY · MCMXVI

PS3505
C95855
1916

COPYRIGHT, 1916,
By JOHN LANE COMPANY

*All rights of reproduction of
the designs in this volume
are reserved by the artist,
Mr. John P. Campbell.*

\$1.00

Press of
J. J. Little & Ives Company
New York, U. S. A.

APR 13 1916

© Cl. A 427669

no. 1.

Apr. 14/16.

TO
ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

THESE SONGS OF HEROIC IRELAND, WRITTEN IN
THE UNITED STATES, ARE DEDICATED, IN
MEMORY OF HIS LONG, DEVOTED AND
HONORABLE SONG-SERVICE TO
THAT DEAR MOTHERLAND

THE author returns thanks for permission to use in this collection of her poems, those which have appeared in The Century Magazine, The Smart Set, The New York Times, Harper's Weekly, The Rosary, the Gaelic-American, The Irish-American, Sinn Fein, etc.

Contents

SINGING FIRES

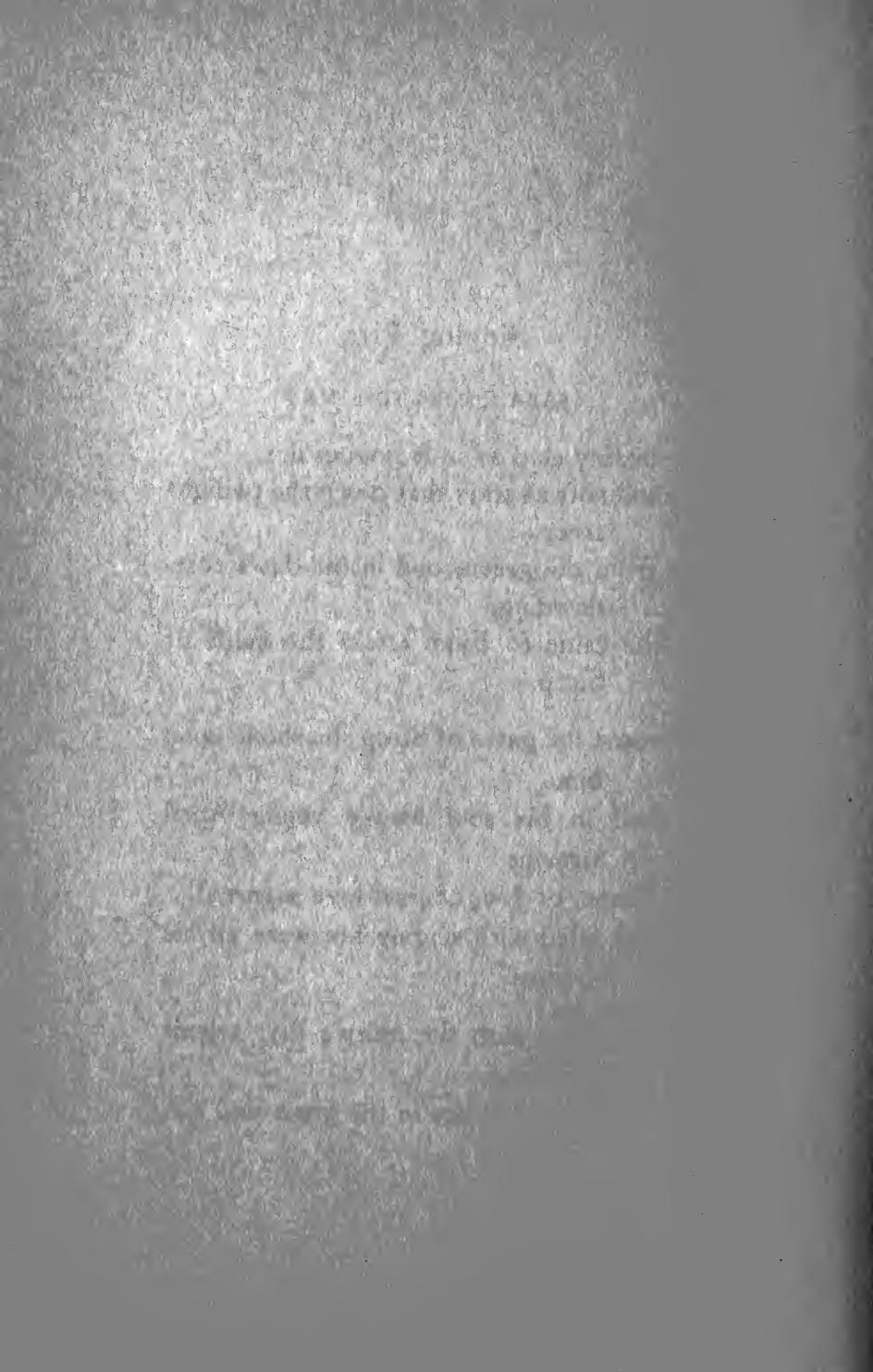
	PAGE
Singing Fire	11
Deirdre to her Women	13
Finovar Dead	18
Gods and Heroes of the Gael	21
A Greek Lover of Queen Maeve	24
A Song of Cormac Conloingias	27
Ængus Og and the Swan-Maiden	31
To your Palace of Golden Dreams, O Ængus!	33
One Goes to Brugh	36
The Coming of Lugh	37
Dectera's Cradle-Song to Cuchulain	39
Song of Emer	41
A Ballad of Dead Queens	43
Death of Cuchulain	45
The Coming of Finn	48
Goddess and Poet	51
A Ballad of Queen Etain	53
The Spirits Mourn for Ængus	56

CONTENTS

A HOSTING OF HEROES

	PAGE
A Hosting of Heroes	61
The Dream of Ængus Og	63
Flight of Diarmuid and Grainné	66
Diarmuid and Grainné at the Forest of Dooris	70
Grainné Returns to Tara	73
Cuchulain	78
Cuchulain's Wooing	80
Emer's Girlhood	82
Cuchulain to the Poets	84
An Earth Spirit	86
The Magic Isles of Manannan	87
The Last of the Fianna	90
Of One Who Died in Murias	93
The Sleeping Knight	95
Dreaming of Cities Dead	98
The Singers to Their Lady	100
An Irish Enchantment	101
O Radiant Faith of Ireland	103
Legendary and Mythological Index	107

I
SINGING FIRES



Singing Fire

(SABA COMES TO FINN)

IN beauty clad as in a singing fire,
And soft as stars that down the twilight
creep,
So from the greenwood in the day's rose-
dawning,
She came to Finn across the fields of
Sleep.

Athwart the gates of Sleep she shone upon
him,
And in his soul awoke young April
streams
Of Hope, of Joy, of poet-love supernal,
And filled with singing fire were all his
dreams.

And waking with the morn's first argent
gleaming,
To faery harpings in the grass and air,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

The woodland maid predestined for his
 mating,
Earth's virgin flower she stood before
 him there.

Within her eyes the calm of sylvan spaces
 By any wind of mortal life unstirred,
And silver cadences of elfin laughter
 Under the moon in forest-places heard.

And all around them rose a flame of sing-
 ing,
Wherein all breathing Nature bore its
 part,
As, with high vows of knightly faith un-
 swerving,
Finn drew the dream-seen Saba to his
 heart.

So, from the light of deathless love en-
 kindled
In their bright spirits on that gracious
 morn,
A star to shine on Eire's way forever,
The singing fire of Ossian's song was
 born.

Deirdre to Her Women

Now Night, a purple wizard, down the
hills

Walks, and the shadows with strange whis-
pers fills,

And broken laughter-drifts, and . . . a
little tune

Naoise and I sang often to the Moon;
A song of two who once upon a night
Had fled and wed in a High King's
despite,

And seaward laughing from his anger ran
Down cloudy ways untrod of god or man;
And so took ship . . . but wherefore tell
again

A story time-dried on the lips of men:
Time-dried, time-cried, for to earth's ut-
most years,

Lovers; I think, shall speak this thing with
tears;

And harpers chaunt to chords of cadenced
pain,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

How Deirdre widowed was, and Naoise
slain;
Their glance enfettered by that thrice-filled
grave,
And the pale Queen who loved, but might
not save. . . .

But not thus shall you speak it—you who
know
With what unquelled soul in high ways I
go;
Bringing unto the state of Ulster's king
Such pride as it is meet his Queen should
bring;
Such pride as one may know who from
Life's heart
Seized with sure hands its one unfailing
part;
Holding it yet, yea, even through this
Night,
This dearth of all desire and all delight,
Undimmed as on that hour it first became
Life of her own life, flame of her soul's
flame.

DEIRDRE TO HER WOMEN

But say it over and over again—like this:
In slow-paced words, such as befit the
tongue
Of mortals gauging an immortal bliss:
“For seven full years, strong, beautiful
and young,
These twain dwelt in a wood beyond the
seas,
Knew the wild fellowship of sun and
breeze,
With lips untired each morning quaffed
Life’s cup,
That laughter, song and loveliness
brimmed up;
And counting, level-eyed, their rapture’s
cost,
Cried ever, ‘Well for this is all else lost!
Yea, well for this that yet upon a morn
Whereof the gods know, Death the mate
twin-born,
The bane, the flower, the crowning of our
love,
Shall smite out utterly the light thereof;
Shall smite the cup alike from hand and
mouth

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

While yet the clasp is strong, unquencht
the drouth,
Shall make of this, our Love's bright-
blossomed prime,
Only a wailing on the lips of Time.' "

Yea, had this life lasted but seven days,
Yet were it matter for wonder and great
praise:
For well you know how Love's red cheek
grows pale
Oft in a week, and honey-cloyed and stale,
Ere ever yet a new moon take the place
Of that which smiled upon its infant face.
And if, as presently, perchance I chose
The bonds of this too-shining state to
loose;
If, from this splendid void and nothing-
ness,
Your twilight faces, Conchubar's caress,
I step with foot and spirit unafraid
Into that other Void where Naoise's shade
Wanders, awaiting mine, be yours this
pride
To tell how well it was we loved and died:

DEIRDRE TO HER WOMEN

Adding this word to make your tale complete,

“Where great Love is, Death is not, nor
Defeat.”

Finovar Dead

DOWN the dark ways, down the dim ways,
down the ways unknown,
Finovar, beloved of princes, lo, she goes
alone!

She whose face a rose of flame shone
where the sword-blades crossed,
She whose love a windy flame led where
Death's whirlpools tossed;
She the wine of whose bright beauty
dashed from waiting lips,
Earth for thought of that it loses bows in
awed eclipse.

Poppies, poppies, scarlet poppies for her
brow and breast—
Shall not Death himself come kneeling to
receive this guest?
Down the wraith-pale line of heroes what
red joy shall run,
As among them yet ensanguined of the
wind and sun,

FINOVAR DEAD

Flower-crowned, gold-crowned, fair past
any eyes of men have known,
Shines their lady's face upon them as of
old it shone.

What mad poet raised that chaunting?
Bid him thitherwards—

Mark how still to-day the princess goes
among her lords;

Still as Ferdia on that morning when upon
their shields

Backward here his warriors bore him
through the sleeping fields;

Still as crimson plains of battle in a win-
ter's dawn,

Beacon-fires turned pallid ashes, warring
armies gone.

All the beauty of the world is less for that
she takes

With her where no blast of morning
Night's dim empire shakes;

In far Brugh love's eye seeks Ængus
through a clouding rain,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Twilight-pale the incensed fires on his
altars wane :

And a wind of Danaan laughter flies along
the swords,

Where the silent hosts of Erin camp be-
side the fords.

Gods and Heroes of the Gael

FORTH in shining phalanx marching from
the shrouding mists of time,
Bright the sunlight on their foreheads,
bright upon their golden mail,
Lord of beauty, lords of valor, lords of
Earth's unconquered prime,
Come the gods, the kings, the heroes of
the Gael.

Lugh, the splendor of whose shining lit
the forest and the fen,
He whose smile at first illuming all the
shadow-haunted space
Of the vast, primeval ranges, death-
engirdled, shunned of men,
Over virgin seas to Erin led our race.

Mananaan, great lord of Ocean — he
whose fair domain outspread
Wheresoever tides foam-flowered to the
moon's high mandate move,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Ængus, clothed in youth immortal, on immortal ardors fed,
Who of old in golden Brugh reigned lord of Love.

And his name a knightly pennon on the ramparts of the world,
And his fame a fire unfailing on Time's utmost purple height,
Erin's peerless gage of courage to the vaunting ages hurled—
Sunward evermore Cuchulain holds his flight.

They are coming with the silver speech of Erin on their lips;
The speech that once of all the mighty Celtic race made kin,
They are coming with the laughter that has known no age-eclipse,
They are coming with the songs beloved of Finn.

Yea, with gifts regenerating to all men of women born—

GODS AND HEROES OF GAEL

Flame of courage that shall fade not,
 flame of truth that shall not fail,
To the music of a thousand harps they're
 marching through the Morn,
Deathless gods and kings and heroes of
 the Gael!

A Greek Lover of Queen Maeve

How shall my song reach to her where
afar,

She walks by streams unlit of sun or star;
Walks dreamingly, as one who in a glass
Beholds the wraiths of perished lovers
pass:

Smiling to each pale face with lips that
saith,

"How fares it, love, in the dim fields of
Death?"

For just with such a smile—earth's last
delight—

Glanced she adown the torchlit hall that
night;

Herself a white rose 'mid a hedge of
spears,

Set far past range of mortal hopes or
fears:

So steel-bright 'mid its steel engirdlement,
Shone that white, moveless face upon me
bent.

A LOVER OF QUEEN MAEVE

White face—whose fame on scented sea-
winds sped,
Me thitherwards to that far land had led,
From templed groves where sage and stu-
dent walked,
And storied ways where moonlight lovers
talked;
From all delights of mind and heart that
lie
Betwixt our kind Athenian soil and sky.

But ah, that hour, which far repaid all
cost
Of lesser loves, of gods and country lost,
When on a dream-starred night that great
Queen leant
Her cheek to mine, and all our spirits
blent
In one long wonder-glance, one earth-
eclipse
Of touching hands, of meeting eyes and
lips!

.
A time for all things—with unfluttered
breath

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

The flame-bright lips proclaimed—"His
sentence—Death!"

While wild, reverberate echoes of her
word

The brazen rafters of the palace stirred,
And hail-swift down on sense and sound
and sight

The smiting shields descended through the
night.

Bright love, delight and death—for this I
came

To that far land: for this a little flame
Smaller than any star on night's pale edge,
My soul, a white moth flits by sand and
sedge;

Flits evermore, till in the ceaseless whirl
Of Time's great wings it win again to her.

A Song of Cormac Conloingias

I

THE PLANTING OF THE TREE

"THAT something shall remain to tell
Of all the joy that once was ours,
Of all our high and dream-filled hours
Ere ever Death upon us fell.
For sight, for sign, for memory
Of all that made our love divine,
Lo, here," she said, "O Cormac mine,
I plant this day a little tree."

"For that first day when here you came,
For that first hour when in our eyes
Shone forth in mutual, swift surprise
Our spirits' new-enkindled flame.
For that long wonder-night when I,
Our love's first consecrating kiss
Yet on my mouth, in sleepless bliss
Watched till the morn flamed down the
sky."

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

"This little tree—to moon and star,
Through all the star-filled nights of June,
Its leaves shall sing a magic rune
To woo us from the shades afar.
The sea-bound winds shall list the tale,
And to the utmost isles of earth
Shall bear it on, till midst their mirth
Kings at its hearing shall grow pale."

"For you, O Cormac, son of kings —
Fire in your veins and on your lips—
Already lowers Death's eclipse,
Your dirge the white Shee-maiden sings.
Though diamond-bright is Emain's
 throne,
And many roads to Emain lead,
And you are last of Connor's seed,
You ride a darker road alone."

"For I, whose love a net of Death
Was round about your spirit cast,
Behold, even now, I hold you fast
By spell of eyes and hands and breath.
My treasure plucked from out the core
Of life at its resplendent prime,

SONG OF CORMAC CONLOINGIAS

My love, whom Death, the lord of Time,
Shall seal mine own forevermore."

"Yea, mine past hap of mortal change,
Past other loves to come between,
Past lure of goddess or of queen,
Past beauty's waning to estrange.
Though all our life's high holiday
Draw to a twilight grey and chill,
Though gift of years were mine to will,
I would not, dare not, bid you stay."

II

THE CRIMSON FRUITAGE

Out of the West the King's son came,
Through flame of the dying day rode he,
And where the rowans lean to the South,
Deep in the garden of my mouth
He planted flowering kisses three.

He said that he would come again,
He plucked the rowan berries red,
He fashioned them into a crown,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And from his fair height stooping down,
He bound and wound them round my
head.

And swift and sweet across my eyes
The life-touch of his lips flashed then:
"And thus," he said, "O heart's delight,
I lay me on your breath and sight,
To keep until I come again."

And now the rowan boughs are brown,
But red the roads from Connacht are,
And they have raised his Ogham stone
O'er Cormac where he sleeps alone,
From Emain of the Kings afar.

Ængus Og and the Swan-Maiden

ROSE-RED o'er the glimmering marshes,
Rose-red o'er the darkling lake,
Lo! the face of the Dawn outflashes
From the faery Moon's grey wake,
And I through the reeds elve-haunted,
The road to my true love take.

Rose-white is the breast of my true love—
Yea, whiter than drifting snow;
And for her are the dim reeds singing
A murmurous sleep-song low,
As yonder beneath their shadows
Dreaming her white wings go.

Rose of the Dawn, 'mid the lilies,
Her flower-fair way she keeps,
How from that dream shall I rouse her,
How for the spirit that sleeps,
Give her the soul of a woman,
A woman that laughs and weeps.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Rose of the World! from thy dreaming
I bid thee awake! Arise!
From the floor of the shimmering waters,
From the roof of the open skies,
Come with the love-light gleaming
In thy heart, thy lips, thine eyes!

Rose of my life, and its crowning!
Flower of the Dream and the Dawn,
Now is my long quest over,
Now is the grim Night gone,
Yonder the sun exultant
Rises and beckons us on!

To Your Palace of Golden Dreams,
O Ængus!

To your palace of golden dreams, O
Ængus!

Lo, to rekindle a dream one goes,
To your garden of golden dreams, O
Ængus!

One to garner the Deathless Rose.

And the sun and the moon and the stars,
O Ængus!

And twilight and night and the rose-red
dawn

And the singing waves of the sea, O
Ængus!

Are wooing and luring my footsteps on.

And the song you sang to Etain, O Ængus,

And the song the swan-maid sang to you
And the singing waves of the sea, O
Ængus!

Are wafting my spirit back to Brugh.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

To Brugh where lingers the Love that dies
not,

To Brugh where yet of the years un-
dimmed,

Bright as the stars of Earth's first morn-
ing,

Dwells the Beauty of poets hymned.

And one with the rising day, O Ængus,

Shall come to you, call to you, sleeping
there,

And you from the shrouding clay, O
Ængus!

Shall rise flame-bright to your poet's
prayer.

One Goes to Brugh

HERE, where silence like a prayer,
 Binds the spirit in its spell,
Here where peerless, shining, fair,
 Thou, O Ængus, once didst dwell!

Here, where guided by the gleam
 Of no earth-seen sun or star,
I the Dreamer of a Dream,
 Come to thee from fields afar.

Here, where ranged like wizards hoar,
 Brooding through the tranced day,
On the rites they knew of yore,
 Rise the Druid-altars grey.

Here to grace thy poet's sighs,
 Here to gladden soul and sight,
Wilt thou not awake and rise,
 Crowned and plumed and wreathed
 with light?

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Girt about with singing flame,
Through whose radiance one may see
Gold-bright birds that hymn thy name
In a dreaming ecstasy.

Swifter than a poet's thought
Borne upon the wings of Morn,
Rise, with love and rapture fraught
To all men of women born!

The Coming of Lugh

DECTERA SINGS

AWAKE, my soul! Awake, and sing!
Across the foam's white blossoming
Comes now thy lover and thy king.

The cuckoo calls the drowsing May,
Behind the whitethorn's latticed spray
The blackbird pipes his heart away.

A magic laughter floods and fills
The song of Spring-awakened rills,
And unseen harpers walk the hills.

Along the mountains' purple ledge
The Shée arise from fern and sedge
To dance upon the daylight's edge.

Through all green life that buds and blows,
And with glad Summer's prescience glows,
A rout of Danaan laughter goes.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And I, the mortal girl who won
Thy love, O brightest-shining one,
Await thee here, my life, my Sun!

Dectera's Cradle-Song to Cuchulain

It was great Lugh himself from heaven,
Came down to be my lord, my love,
To me his plighted faith was given,
And this, the flower and fruit thereof.

Then sing, my soul, thy lord the sun,
Sing for the little life begun;
Sing for the crown thy land hath won
To light her brows forever.

My little son! whose shining way
Shall lie across the risen day;
Thee Fear shall touch not, nor dismay,
Nor blight of mortal sorrow.

A laughter on the edge of swords,
A war-song chaunted at the fords,
A death-bolt launched 'mid hostile hordes,
O child who shall withstand thee?

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

A torch to guide the eyes of men
Past deeps of quicksand and of fen,
Beyond where even thy mother's ken
 May follow, lo, thy way lies!

Far, far beyond the furthest flight
Of song or star, thy fame's fair flight,
As, son of Light, towards the light
 Thou goest forever.

Song of Emer

IN the red of the windy Dawn,
Through the honey-sweet, dew-bright
clover,

Over mount, over mead, over lawn
He is coming, my lord, my lover!

From the heart of the utmost Night
Where nor elf-flame nor star-flame
lightens,

Lo, he holds to my heart his flight,
Lo, he comes with a brow that bright-
ens!

There is laughter upon his mouth
For the rapturous mirth of living,
For the lips that shall slake its drouth
And sing to the gods for the giving.

There is laughter for battles won,
There is laughter for Right defended,
There is laughter for Justice done,
In the blue eye falcon-splendid.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Where the red of his chariot gleams
 There are songs on the lips of women,
There is praise on the tongue of Queens,
 There is Fear on the face of foemen.

And bright as his sun-bright sword
 When it leaps to the foeman's slaying,
Is the light on the head of my lord,
 Is the light on his gold hair playing.

And when in the unseen days
 The poets their praises chaunting,
Shall utter Cuchulain's praise,
 Shall sing of his valor vaunting:

Me too, his beloved, they shall sing,
 No praise to my name refusing,
The Queen of their soul's dead King,
 The bride of his heart's first choosing.

A Ballad of Dead Queens

[EMER]

IN all the twilight realm of dreams, I wis,
There walks no Queen so high-hearted as
 this,
Who, gazing on her King and Sweetheart
 dead,
Sped forth her soul to his in one last
 kiss.

Other great Queens in that dim purple
 space
There dwell, of whose bright loveliness
 and grace
Poets have sung, until some trait of theirs
Each lover sees in his own lady's face.

The shining Daughter of the Swan, and
 she
Who once with Tristram on a summer sea
Under the witch-light of a waning moon
Drank deep the chalice of their destiny.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Pale Guinevere, her eyes yet heavy-fraught
With dreams of two who rode to Camelot,
And mouth that still, for all the dead,
 dumb years
Is dewy with the breath of Lancelot.

But on her heart the Rose Inviolatè
Of love triumphant over Death and Fate,
Of Love that perished on the lips that fed,
Queen Emer holds unchanged her royal
 state.

Death of Cuchulain

SILENT are the singers in the purple halls
of Emain,

Silent all the harp-strings untouched of
any hand,

Wan as twilight-roses the radiant, royal
women,

Black upon the hearthstone the erst-
while flaming brand.

Inward far from ocean the storm's white
birds are flying,

Darting, like dim wraith-flames across
the falling night,

Winds like a *caoine* through the quicken-
groves are sighing,

On no lip is laughter, in no heart de-
light.

For thitherwards witch-wafted athwart
the sundering spaces,

Lo, a word doom-freighted unto Con-
chubar has come,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Whispering of one who in far-off, hostile
places
Strikes a last defending blow for king
and home.

And the King pacing lone in his place of
High Decision,
Gazing with wrapt eyes on that far-
flung battle-plain,
Through the red rains rising beholds with
startled vision
Sight such as man's eye shall not see
again.

For one there is dying, of his foes at last
outnumbered,
One whose soul a sword was, shaped
by God's own hand,
One who guarded Ulaidh when all her
kighthood slumbered,
Prone beneath the curse laid of old upon
the land.

And dying so, alone, of all mortal aid
forsaken,

DEATH OF CUCHULAIN

Dead his peerless war-steeds, dead his
 charioteer,
Yet the high splendor of his spirit all un-
 shaken,
Shines morning-bright through the
 Death-mists drawing near.

And radiant round his brow yet the hero-
 flame is gleaming,
And firm yet his footstep upon the red-
 dened sod,
As with sword uplifted towards the day's
 last beaming,
Forth goes the spirit of Cuchulain unto
 God.

Leaving to his land and the Celtic race
 forever
That which shall not fail them through-
 out the fading years,
Heritage of faith unchanged, of fear-
 undimmed endeavor,
And a quenchless laughter ringing down
 the edge of hostile spears.

The Coming of Finn

"THE Norsemen's ships are in the Bay,
To-morrow ere the throstle calls
Good-morning to the risen day,
The wizard comes to fire my walls."

"The gods are of inconstant mind,
And of their ancient faith forswore,
The sun, the moon, the stars, the wind,
I pray to them, but pray no more."

So spake King Cormac to his lords,
In Erin's ancient council-place,
A freighted silence drank his words,
And no man looked him in the face.

But at the outer portal came
The answer to a challenge flung,
An age-grey Druid spoke the name
Of Cumhal, long of poets sung.

THE COMING OF FINN

And with that saying one strode in,
Of height so great, of mien so fair,
The high gods might have deemed him kin,
Nor less he seemed to any there.

“And what strange word is this I hear?”
He said, “that strikes your laughter
still,
That through the Dawn a Shape of Fear
Walks unassailed on Tara’s Hill?”

“That, kindled by his baleful hands,
The flames shall flash on Tara’s height,
And Tara’s self be but a brand
Flung red against the morn’s pale
light!”

“And, for this Shape derives its birth
From spirits to our land malign,
Shall it be whispered round the earth
That Erin’s valor grows supine?”

“Nay, never so; against all odds
Of Hate, of Treachery, of Force,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Of jealous men or hostile gods
Must Erin's knighthood hold its
course."

"And I, unto her service vowed,
Ere ever yet the morrow's born,
Myself shall seek this wizard proud,
And smite him hence to shame and
scorn!"

So spoke great Finn, his task begun,
So, Fear-destroying down the day
Flamed Erin's young, imperial Sun
Of Truth and Faith and Chivalry.

Goddess and Poet

WITH Love-sandalled feet o'er-stepping
Night's ensabled bars,
With thy maiden train descending
Down a stair of stars:
Far beyond the utmost splendor
Of Desire or dream,
Thou upon thy poet's vision,
Goddess, soon shall't gleam!

Each man's vision to his fancy—
Mine was one of flame,
Wandering here 'mid Beltane fires
Oft I called thy name;
Called as mortal to immortal,
Answer hoping none,
Save the mirthless voice of Echo
Down the hillsides blown.

But the stars sang all together,
As the wondering Night
Held ajar her purple portals
For thine earthward flight:

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Flashed the swift, auroral radiance
Straightway from the skies,
Flooding with its white effulgence
Heart and lips and eyes.

Rose of that supernal whiteness,
First to mortal view
Then revealed, thou stood'st before me
Goddess, maiden too.
Flower of all Night's star-bright meadows,
Lo, thou shonest there,
Of thine own high will responding
To thy poet's prayer.

Now old days and ways forgotten,
Fires of hearth and home,
Face of waiting sire and sister,
'Mid the hills I roam.
Poet blest of all earth's poets,
Whose poor song to crown,
From the furthest heights of heaven
Came a goddess down.

A Ballad of Queen Etain

A YOUNG HARPER SINGS

THOUGH you should walk a thousand
years

Along the singing roads that run
Beneath the green seas, or should go
Through all the valleys of the sun;
Though you should climb the starry stairs

Upon whose utmost purple height
Girt round about with song and fire,

Rose-red desire and hearts-delight,
Sits Dana, queen of gods and men,

Great mother of the Danaan race,
Whose eyes eternal torches are

Of awe, of rapture and of grace;
Whose lips are founts whereto shall come,
Their souls athirst for love and fame;

Earth's pilgrim-poets, thence to take
New flame and re-awakened flame:

Or should you racing with the Moon,
Her flying, foam-white feet outspeed,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And o'er the hedges of the Night
Take flight upon a magic steed,
Not in the meadows of the stars,
Nor by the streams that wind their way
From where the twilight kisses night,
To where the dawn is one with day.
Nor, though by scented billows borne,
Your feet should reach those far-flung
Isles,
Whence Fand from great Manannan fled
To seek her earth-born lover's smiles;
Nor there, nor there, nor anywhere,
In wonder-fields of earth or sky,
Shall shine upon your eyes a Queen
Clothed in a loveliness so high,
As she in singing whose bright grace
Gods snatch from men the glad refrain,
Until its fragrance fills the ways
Of earth and heaven — "Etain!"
"Etain!"

He strikes his harp with languid hands,
That younger minstrel chaunting there,
For his eyes' desire is caught in the
strands

A BALLAD OF QUEEN ETAIN

Of the Queen's bright hair.

And his soul's desire from his lips has
flown,

To bathe in the blue lake of her eyes,
While his song, a rose-leaf passion-blown,
Upon his wan lip dies.

The Spirits Mourn for Ængus

O ÆNGUS! lord forever dear,
To thee we cry, to thee we call,
Time strikes us with his leaden spear,
The heavy hours upon us fall—
Hear us, O master, hear!

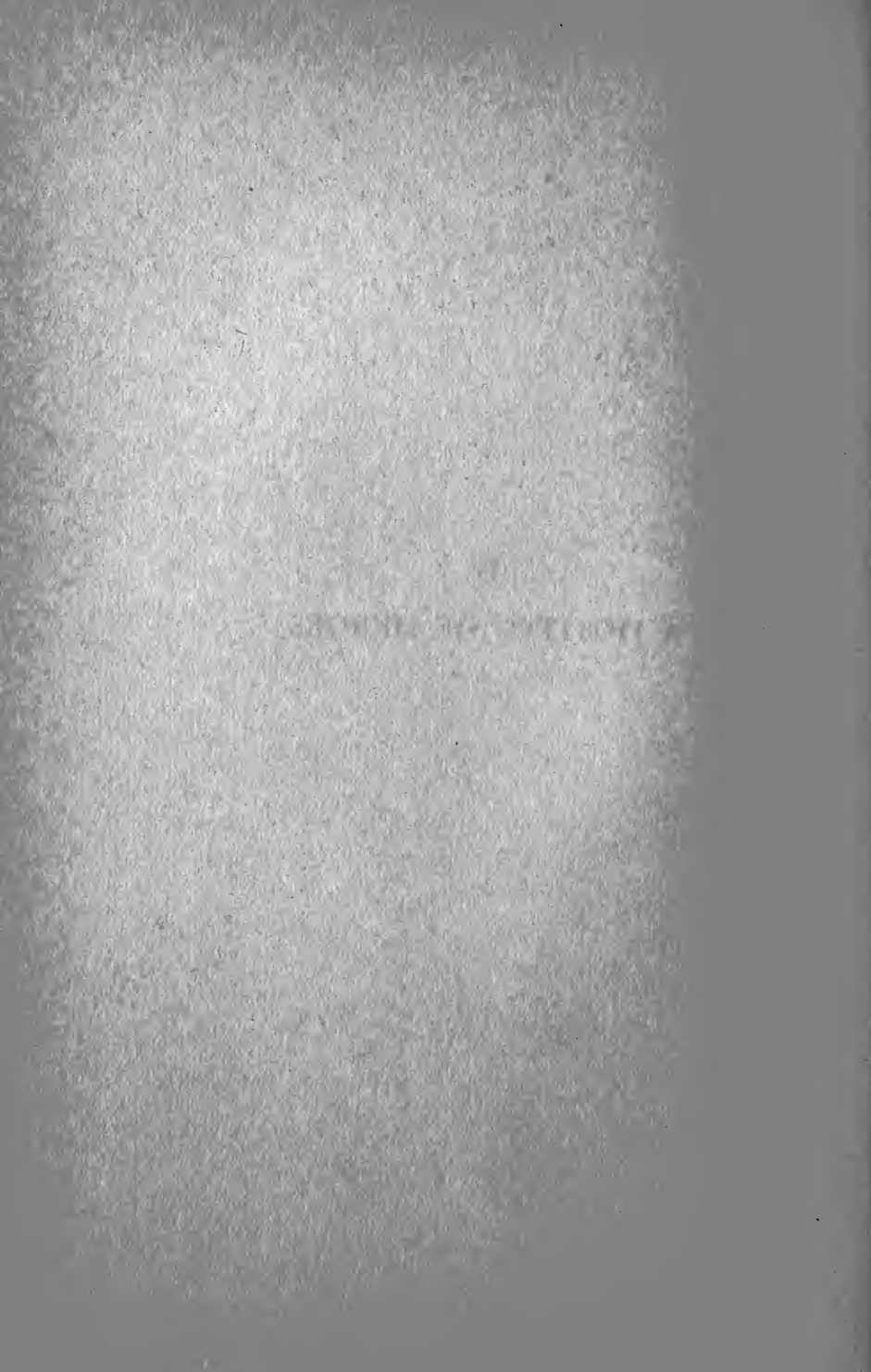
By what bright seas thy footsteps go,
What lands are gladdened by thy grace,
We know not, this we only know—
We die for hunger of thy face.
Hear us, O master, hear!

The fires are dim upon thy fanes,
Here, even here, in golden Brugh,
No song, no sign, no word remains,
To speak the splendor that it knew.
Hear us, O master, hear!

We pass, we fade, the shadows creep
Upon us, drink our beauty up,

SPIRITS MOURN FOR ÆNGUS

God pours us on the lips of Sleep,
And flings away the empty cup.
We die! we die! we die!



II

A HOSTING OF HEROES

A Hosting of Heroes

LORD God to Thee, a song of praise
For these, Thy paladins, we raise;
Each name of whom a flag unfurled
Athwart the ramparts of the world
Remains a living word and sign
Of all that made or makes divine
The race wherefrom they drew their
 breath,
The land they loved and served till death.

From him who 'midst his foes alone,
Self-bound unto the Pillar-stone,*
To Doom's grey face and darkling skies
Turned yet unconquered, sun-glad eyes,
To him, that later chief,† whose name
Gleams yet a torch of unquenched flame,
A beacon flung against the dark,
To light our feet to Freedom's ark.

For all who kept their sword-bright trust,
Their sword-bright faith undimmed of
 rust;

*Cuchulain

†Parnell

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

From whose dead lips unto our own
The sacred word of Duty borne,
Shall yet from Night uplift our land,
And work the glory that they planned—
For those we praise, for these we laud
Thy everlasting name, Lord God.

The Dream of Ængus Og

WHEN the rose o' Morn through the
Dawn was breaking,
And white on the hearth was last night's
flame,
Thither to me 'twixt sleeping and waking,
Singing out of the mists she came.

And grey as the mists on the spectre
meadows
Were the eyes that on my eyes she laid,
And her hair's red splendor through the
shadows
Like to the marsh-fire gleamed and
played.

And she sang of the wondrous far-off
places
That a man may only see in dreams,
The death-still, odorous, starlit spaces
Where Time is lost and no life gleams.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And there till the day had its crest up-
lifted,

She stood with her still face bent on me,
Then forth with the Dawn departing
drifted

Light as a foam-fleck on the sea.

And now my heart is the heart of a
swallow

That here no solace of rest may find,
For evermore I follow and follow
Her white feet glancing down the wind.

And forevermore in my ears are ringing—
(Oh! red lips yet shall I kiss you
dumb!)

Twain sole words of that May morn's
singing,
Calling to me "Hither!" and "Come!"

From flower-bright fields to the wild lake-
sedges

Crying my steps when the Day has gone,

THE DREAM OF ÆNGUS OG

Till dim and small down the Night's pale
edges

The stars have fluttered one by one.

And light as the thought of a love for-
gotten

The hours skim past, while before me
flies

That face of the Sun and Mist begotten,
Its singing lips and death-cold eyes.

Flight of Diarmuid and Grainné

LAUGHING she came to him, swift-footed,
sweet,
Laid the command of her eyes on his
eyes,
Captured the soul of him ardent and fleet,
Whispered him, "Diarmuid, my dearest,
arise!"

"Yonder the dawn-light cleaves sheer
through the dark,
Morn rises early to gladden our way;
Fleeing, our spirits shall soar with the
lark,
Herald to hymn us to life's fuller day."

"Ah, but my loyalty!"—"Ah, but my love,
Is that a little thing, think you, O man?
Higher it is than the high gods above—
Mated we were ere Creation began!"

DIARMUID AND GRAINNE

Then, "But the bride of my liege-lord thou
art,

Grainné, my princess, and I am his
friend."

"Nay, but I follow the law of my heart,
That is thine only, and thine to the
end."

Fire to the flame of her wooing he rose,
And one last glance at great Fionn held
fast,

Leashed in the chain of his spell-wrought
repose,

Out of the doors of the palace they
passed.

Stars lingered yet in the lap of the
night,

Waiting their pleasure and wooing them
on,

Yet for a moment they paused in their
flight,

Hand touching hand in the sweet-
scented dawn.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Lip pressed to lip in a virginal, new
Rapture that sped like white fire down
each vein,
While in that Love's first communion they
grew
Wise as the gods are of bliss and of
pain.

Silent as gods, when they quaff the divine
Essence of life, save for one murmured
word;
"Bride of my soul who forever art mine!"
"Thine past all parting, my love and
my lord!"

Oh, for the grace of that journey begun!
Night fled before them and red rose
the Morn,
Then with fair faces upraised to the Sun,
Joyous they sang for the joy to them
born.

Fearless and sweet rose their pæan of
praise,
Hymning the love that makes laughter
of Death,

DIARMUID AND GRAINNÉ

Nature, their mother, through all her
green ways

Echoed their singing with rapturous
breath.

Diarmuid and Grainné at the Forest of Dooris

SWEETER than any life beneath the sun,
Or any dream of life the high gods deign
To let upon men's sleeping eyelids shine,
Was that for these at Dooris now begun.

For swift and strong and beautiful, their
lips
Unspoiled, insatiate, bent to kiss the cup
Of perfect joy the cloudless days held up—
The long sweet days of Light without
eclipse.

For whether grey or gold the skies above,
For them undimmed shone one imperial
sun—
And other light their glad eyes needed
none—
The flame immortal of their mortal love.

DIARMUID AND GRAINNÉ

And Summer wrought for them a garden-
close

High-hedged and all a-bloom with blossoms rare;

And sweeter all her roses for them were
For that amongst them gleamed one
Death-red Rose.

Yea, and for that a little way outside
The scented hedgerows, clear-discerned,
stood Fate,

Saying, "Behold a little while I wait
The day that shall destroy them and
divide!"

Thus fronting always, wheresoe'er they
turned,

The Doom to be escaped not, nor denied,
The splendor of the love that might have
died

Of its own greatness ever brighter burned.

And if upon their raptured harmonies
Of speech and glance, a pause, at times,
would come,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

'Twas but because great pity smote them
dumb
For all their days that yet had been ere
these.

So that fair Lord the shining of whose face
Had lit their way from Tara through the
Night,
Love, the high Emperor of their delight,
Filled all their days with gladness and
with grace.

So armored in their own bright fearless-
ness
Against what hap of sorrow or surprise
The hand of god or mortal might devise,
Laughing they drained their leeless wine
of bliss.

Grainné Returns to Tara

So bright-faced Diarmuid slept where no
to-morrow

Should rouse him with its bugle-call of
Light

In that far land beyond the range of
sorrow

Where mighty Ængus bore him through
the night;

While she for whom no morn of mortal
waking

Should bring again the radiance of his
smile,

Watched by him through the long days
unforsaking,

Deeming, perchance, that for a little
while,

Might yet come true that word of Ængus'
speaking,

That, by his Danaan wizardry restored,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Some shadow-semblance of himself displaying,
Should live again her ever-worshipped
lord:
But as the long, bright days in still succession
Passed, bringing no light to the dead
man's face,
So passed from out her life in cowed
procession,
All that had made its laughter, love and
grace.

And in their stead came that—the last,
best giving
Of the strong gods—the god-like consciousness,
That nevermore through all her years of
living,
Should any great pain, yea, or any
bliss
Reach to her soul, where on its high
pedestal
Of utmost rapture, utmost anguish,
known,

GRAINNE RETURNS TO TARA

It kept its state, inviolate and vestal,
A white lamp burning by a tomb alone.

But when no more the soft, unchequered
splendor

Of those long days at Brugh her soul
might brook,

Nor any further hope the gods would lend
her,

To Tara back her wistful way she took;
The courtiers watching with the avid
vision

Of those who see a dead dream vivified,
Beholding in her eye that bright decision,
And on her lip that red, unconquered
pride.

Murmured of marvels all belief exceed-
ing—

Of women's veering faith—dead men
forgot—

Interpreting each by his own light reading
Of Life, the change that Deathless
Grief had wrought;

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

The wondrous change—that sun-bright
 Winter gleaming
Of a great spirit unsubdued of Pain,
That kept before men's eyes its royal
 seeming,
When long had vanished love's brief,
 radiant reign.

But once—'twas in the singing April
 weather—
Came lilted to her on a vagrant
 breeze
A snatch of song that they had sung to-
 gether
In old, glad days beneath the quicken
 trees;
And then for all she was a High King's
 daughter,
Of whom no weakness any man might
 tell,
Down her pale cheeks the hot tears flowed
 like water
Of brooks released from Winter's icy
 spell.

GRAINNÉ RETURNS TO TARA

And "Diarmuid!" cried she twice and
thrice, and falling

Rose-white amongst the lilies at her
feet,

Her weeping maidens deemed that in that
calling

Her soul had sped her waiting lord's to
greet:

But no such sweet release to her was
given,

Whose fate it was behind a quenchless
pride

Through long, grey years to hide the spirit
riven

Past mortal hope that day when Diar-
muid died.

Cuchulain

“Never will I break my vow, nor wrong
my land, nor sell my chief.”

THOU, most strong and beautiful, I
Thou, most brave and dutiful,
Thou, thy Ulster's shield and sword,
Thou, her servant and her lord;
Thou whose deeds athwart the years
Flash, a burnished field of spears,
Mighty Cuchulain!

Thou, whose name in splendor lone
Rears itself a pillar-stone,
Radiant through the rains and night,
On thy land's grey, storied height,
Thou who scatheless held thy faith
To thy utmost, labored breath,
Knightly Cuchulain!

Lo! it is to thee I raise
Here, this testament of praise,

CUCHULAIN

Chaunting with glad lips thy fame,
Mouth of Truth and Soul of Flame;
Light that shall not fade or fail,
Sun-bright symbol of the Gael!
Peerless Cuchulain!

Cuchulain's Wooing

GREAT-LIMBED and swift and beautiful
Past any dream, he came to her
From Emain Macha through a land
For gladness of the Spring astir.

And on the flutes of Morning blown,
Strong Joy that took for breath no
pause,
The song of Breeze and Stream and Bird,
The herald of his coming was.

Yea, and through all her April ways,
To Erin's utmost sea-girt rim,
Through waking seed, and blade and leaf,
Green Nature laughed for joy of him.

And where he held his sun-bright course,
Straight-spiced as arrow on its flight,
Men thronged as to a pageant wrought
By the high gods for their delight.

CUCHULAIN'S WOOING

And seeing, with a fairer faith
The Deathless Mighty Ones adored,
Who thus unto their Ulster's need
Had shaped at once a shield and sword.

So through the singing land he passed,
The peerless warden of her fame,
So lord himself of Love and War,
Unto his fair-faced love he came.

Emer's Girlhood

ROSE-BRIGHT where all were flower-fair,
A rose around whose petals yet
In order fresh and odorous
The dreams of maidenhood were set.

The green of April at her feet,
The joy of Springtime round her
spread,
The hope of Summer in her eyes,
The gold of sunrise on her head.

So first upon the sight of him
Who down from Ulster rode alone,
To bring his heart's high love to her,
In the sweet morning Emer shone.

No girl, but Spring herself stepped down
Awhile upon that daisied plain,
She sat, where bright the lilacs spread,
Encompassed by her maiden train.

EMER'S GIRLHOOD

With deft, swift skill of needlehood,
Where Fancy led the flying hand,
Inscribing on a silken scroll
Some storied glory of her land.

Till, raising to his shining height
Her veiled glance, the silken scroll
Slipped down, and in her sea-blue eyes
Shone forth her new-awakened soul.

And rising up, she placed in his
Her gentle palm, and to him gave
Whose heart was high for joy of her,
Her maiden welcome sweet and grave.

Cuchulain to the Poets

O POETS, when you sing of me,
And of the deeds that I have done,
And of the battles that I won,
For Ulster fighting mightily;
Praising me with high hearts of fire—
I pray you also in your song
Tell men how once the World's Desire
Was mine to love a whole day long.

Yea, rose-fair face and mouth of flame—
(O vision that no age shall dim!)
At sunrise o'er the world's bright rim
All golden-raimented she came;
And leaning on the green hill there
To me in fashion woman-wise,
Through the dark twilight of her hair,
I kissed her on the dew-cold eyes.

Aye, kissed until within their blue
A mortal woman's spirit shone,

CUCHULAIN TO THE POETS

Laughed back its answer to my own,
And mine into its sweet self drew—
Folding me there with an old rune
Of kings enwrapped in magic rest,
Till life seemed all a drowsy noon,
To be dreamed out upon her breast.

Her white dove's breast—O men of songs!
This were a tale which rightly sung,
Would make old men grow glad and
young—

Would make old foes forget their wrongs;
For since this joyous world begun,
Was never sure such love as this
By mortal man from woman won—
So fair a dream, so brimmed with bliss.

For with the setting sun she passed—
Swift flame to flame—her rose-bright face
Still with that new-won human grace
Wooing my own unto the last;
Bidding my heart to singing cheer
For joy that on that hillside lone,
Love visible, divine and dear,
Had been through one long day its own.

An Earth Spirit

A FLAME that dances down the wind,
A swallow-wing against the sky,
An autumn leaf to brush your cheek,
And whirl away, no more am I.

Friends fall, dreams fade, the gods are
dead.

My daylight suffers no eclipse—
Across eternal abysms
I kiss to Fate my finger-tips.

For one am I in brain and heart
And breath with her who gave me breath,
Who keeps her green way singingly
Athwart the cairns where slumbereth

Alike high Valor and fair Love;
Where dust the mouth of Deirdre is,
And on the lips of Cuchulain
Forgotten all is Emer's kiss.

The Magic Isles of Manannan

FAIR past furthest reach of mortal dream-
ing,

Swung beyond the sunset's utmost span,
Golden through the purple twilight's
gleaming,

Lie the magic Isles of Manannan.

There, beneath green boughs where fruit
and flower

Bloom together through the cloudless
year,

There, with deathless rapture for their
dower,

Their bright spirits all undimmed of
Fear.

Pace in paired delight, the fond, immor-
tal

Shades whom Honor here love's goal
denied,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

Queens who would not step o'er Duty's
portal,
Lords who held unstained their plumes'
high pride.

Thither sailing through the pearl-pale
splendor
Of a May moon with dream-sails unfurled,
Shall I find thee, O my Queen most tender,
Heart's Desire and White Rose of the
World.

Yea, and finding, wilt thou bend to listen
Lily-wise—(O unforgotten grace!)
Will thy grey eyes into azure glisten,
And the rose-light gladden all thy face?

As at last the Hidden Word is spoken,
As at length the flame-writ script's unrolled,
As for aye the wizard spell is broken
Laid upon our lips in Eireann old.

MAGIC ISLES OF MANANNAN

So I dare to dream, the dull years cheating,
Holding yet our golden vision true,

So O love o' mine this word of greeting
O'er the Fairy Seas I waft to you.

The Last of the Fianna

"They lay down on the side of the hill
at Teamhair and put their lips to the earth,
and died." (*Gods and Fighting Men*)

To the dewy earth they turned their faces,
Sweet, green mother of their old de-
light;

They for whom in Erin no more place
was—

They, the once strong bulwarks of her
might;

Scarce a good man's stone-throw from
where Tara

Reared its shining splendor on the
height.

Golden-shod the hours in that fair palace
Danced like maidens to a festal song,
But for them who drained life's bitter
chalice

THE LAST OF THE FIANNA

There upon the hill, the day was long:
Till sweet Death came down in the grey
twilight,
Death, whose kind kiss heals all hu-
man wrong.

Kissing now their lids of drowsing vision
With a dream of Life as it had been,
Glowing with the joy of swift decision,
Radiant with the flash of sword-blades
keen,
Ringing with the songs of Nature's spring-
time,
Crowned with love of goddess and of
queen.

Calling to them through the trooping
shadows,
Beautiful, undimmed of age or fear,
Those who with them through the golden
meadows
In their morn of manhood cloudless-
clear,
Long ago behind great Finn the peerless,
Rode to chase of foeman or of deer.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

So Night set her seal upon their dreaming
Of brave days and deeds forever gone,
So they passed, the men of god-like seem-
ing,

With their faces set towards the Dawn.
They whose like in all her future story,
Nevermore the earth should look upon.

Of One Who Died in Murias

WHEN for a doom and punishment
God took the green tides of the sea,
And launched them from His hand on
thee,
And all thy pride was from thee rent.

Nor all thy roofs of beaten gold,
Nor all thy walls of chrysolite
Might save thee from the rushing Night
Which down upon thy splendor rolled.

O Murias! with thee to death
Went one whose face was fairer far
Than is in June the vesper star
Seen from the moon an arrow's breadth.

Went one who of all ladies dead
Wast sure most fond and flower-fair,
A spirit wrought of sun and air,
And all on dreams and laughter fed.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

O Dreams! O Laughter! vain to stay
The rushing Death, the green Eclipse
Which surged between our meeting lips,
Which bore thee on its tides away.

White foam! pale sea-drift! at the will
Of the cold moon forever tossed—
Thy beauty but an old tune lost—
And yet one heart remembers still.

Yea, though no harper shall uplift
In song for evermore thy name,
And I am but a wandering flame
Upon the world's grey winds adrift.

Undimmed through all the years I hold,
Whence no god's finger may efface—
O Queen! the shining of thy face
Beneath its coronal of gold.

The Sleeping Knight

"And the spirit of Eireann kissed the
Sleeper's lips."

BUT One came past, a spirit of white
flame,

Who stooped and kissed him on the lips
and eyes,

And whispered in his ear, "Arise!
Arise!

God's heralds to the tourney call thy
name."

Then dream-swift down the morning
winds she sped,

Who had for evermore destroyed his
dreams,

And with a murmured song of waking
streams,

Him through dim ways and dewless meads
she led.

Till suddenly, where rose a purple height
Of sunlit hills between them and the skies,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

A smiting splendor shone upon his eyes
Of bannered hosts arrayed in armored
night.

And when his glance through dazzlement
might scan
The helmèd features of that shining
throng,
Beneath the flags of causes perished long,
He saw the face of many a ruined man.

Yea, side by side in order debonair,
The dead, lost soldiers with the living men
Who strive with proven steel of sword or
pen
For fairer Justice in a world unfair.

"God's mail-clad knights!" she said, "Be-
hold your place!
And here for slakement of your long
road's drouth,
Again I kiss you on the eyes and mouth,
Who may bestow on you no further
grace."

THE SLEEPING KNIGHT

And so was gone, a mist-wreath in the
sun,
No more nor less, but he in that fair host,
Who reckon well all things for Freedom
lost,
His day of life-long service had begun.

Dreaming of Cities Dead

DREAMING of cities dead,
Of bright Queens vanishèd,
Of kings whose names were but as seed
 wind-blown
E'en when white Patrick's voice shook
 Tara's throne,
My way along the great world-street I
 tread,
And keep the rites of Beauty lost, alone.

Cairns level with the dust—
Names dim with Time's dull rust—
Afar they sleep on many a wind-swept
 hill,
The beautiful, the strong of heart and
 will—
On whose pale dreams no sunrise joy shall
 burst,
No harper's song shall pierce with battle-
 thrill.

DREAMING OF CITIES DEAD

Long from their purpled heights,
Their reign of high delights,
The Queens have wended down Death's
 mildewed stair,
Leaving a scent of lilies on the air,
To gladden Earth through all her days
 and nights,
That once she cherished anything so fair.

The Singers to Their Lady

Lo! our Lady, we crave thy grace,
If, for a little space between
Grey of the Dawning, Red of the Morn-
ing,

Yet of beauty and love we dream.
Soon in splendor of Freedom's waking,
Mountain and vale of thine shall gleam,
Then with a glory of swords upflashing
Shall we hail and proclaim thee Queen!

An Irish Enchantment

THERE'S a ripple and shower of song-
drops shaken,

A brown wing whirrs through the white-
thorn spray—

O soul of mine from your dream awaken!
Sweet, green Erin is far away.

Here is no highway of singing thrushes—

Onward with thunderous roar and din,
The great life-stream of the city rushes,
Avid to draw me in.

Yet over it all, the wild, faint laughter

Of grasses astir beneath the moon,
Cries, "Come!" "Come!" "Come!" and
I follow after
The whispering, elfin tune.

And my feet are winged with a blind de-
sire

For brackened hills where the star-
beams rest,

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

And dead as the ash of a last year's fire
Is the spirit within my breast.

Is it not time to cease your dreaming,
Lost and wandering heart o' me say?
O fairy eyes through the thickets gleam-
ing,
You've stolen my soul away!

O Radiant Faith of Ireland

O RADIANT Faith of Ireland! Thou light
of many lands;

Thou flame that goest our feet before,
thou torch within our hands.

Thou golden span across the gulf of sun-
dering ages cast,

Thou glory shining yet undimmed from
out our splendid past.

On thee as on a bulwark strong of old
our sires leant,

Through thee has Ireland's sun-bright soul
to all earth's peoples sent

Her word of an Imperial Hope—of
Truth, serene, divine,

Of Heaven-born Joy all unobscured by
chance or change or time.

Thou fortress reared by Patrick's hand,
that o'er the ravening flood

Of hostile laws, of despot rage, still storm-
unwreckt hast stood;

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

From whose bright portals down the years
true heralds of the Dawn,
From East to West, their Lord to preach,
the Irish priests have gone.

Yea, priest and poet, saint and sage, and
whoso yet would trace
The roadways trodden of their feet along
the world's wide face,
Shall find it by fair towns that lift brave
spires into the air,
Shall find it by the shrines they raised—
their Death-unsilenced prayer.

And one with us in name and fame, in life
and death thou art,
Life of our life, soul of our soul, heart of
our inmost heart:
Alike in gladness as in woe, in triumph as
in loss,
Our Ireland on her bosom wears the sym-
bol of the Cross.

Her children throng the waterways where
pass the mighty ships,

O RADIANT FAITH OF IRELAND

Still pioneers of God they come, a prayer
 upon their lips;
Still bearing to their lineage true, Faith's
 fertilizing rain,
To blossom forth in stranger lands in
 many a shining fane.

And blest and proud forever be the word
 that o'er the earth
Joins "Irish" and "Catholic" in one in-
 stinctive breath;
That said, perchance not all in praise, be-
 comes our two-edged blade,
Wherewith to win in Truth's defense,
 God's knightly accolade.

Legendary and Mythological Index

AENGUS OG (*Angus Og*).—Literally “Young Aengus,” the Gaelic god of love and beauty and immortal youth, whose fairy towers rose at Brugh-na-Boinne. Of him it was said that his kisses as they fell from his lips became singing birds. One of the many beautiful legends associated with him is that of the maiden, who for the space of a twelvemonth, appeared to him at the same hour every night, never speaking, only singing to a little golden harp which she carried in her hands. At the end of that time she disappeared, and Aengus began a tireless search for her throughout Ireland. He finally discovered her, leading an enchanted existence as a swan on the waters of a certain lake. He called her by her name (Caer), she responded, and in the morning, he also having assumed the form of a swan, they flew off together to his palace at Brugh, their singing filling with delight the whole country through which they passed.

AÍNE (*Aí-ne*).—Goddess of love and fire. The poem “Goddess and Poet,” commemorates a strange, Tannhauser-like legend, which represents Aíne in the Christian Ireland of the thirteenth

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

century, responding to the wooing of Thomas, the Wizard Earl of Desmond.

BRUGH.—The dwelling-place of Aengus in the Boyne Valley. (This Valley, so rich in legendary and historic lore, is within a two hours' journey from Dublin.)

CONCHUBAR (*Cón-ov-ar*).—Known also as Connor MacNessa, High King of Ulster about the beginning of the Christian era, founder of the chivalric order of the Red Branch Knighthood, and opponent of Queen Maeve of Connacht in her long wars upon Ulster.

CORMAC CONLOINGIAS.—The warrior-son of Conchubar, said to have come to tragic death through his love for Sceanba, who was also beloved of Craftaine the Harper. They met for the last time at Ath-luin on the Shannon, and there she planted a "little tree and called it Death."

CUCHULAIN (*Coo-hoo-lin*).—The supreme type of Celtic chivalry, the champion of Ulster in the protracted wars waged by Maeve and Conchubar. The pillar-stone at which he died is still pointed out near Dundalk, Co. Louth.

DECTERA.—Sister of Conchubar, mother of Cuchulain. The latter was the son of Sualtim, but popular story represented Dectera as having been beloved and espoused by Lugh the great sun-god of all the Celts.

MYTHOLOGICAL INDEX

DE DANAAN (*Tuátha-de-Danaan*).—Possessors of Ireland at the time of the Milesian landing, and conquered by the latter, this magic, mystic race exercised their wizard powers by making for themselves homes in forest, stream and mountain. They were the heroic forerunners of the diminutive modern Irish fairy.

DIARMUID AND GRAÍNNE (*Dermid and Grainvā*).—King Cormac MacArt gave a banquet at Tara, to celebrate the betrothal of his beautiful daughter, Grainne to Fionn MacCumhail (Finn McCool). But Grainne, noting among Finn's followers, the noble and handsome Diarmuid O'Dyna, at once loved him. Administering to Finn and such others at the banquet as were likely to oppose her will, a sleeping-portion, she besought Diarmuid to go forth with her. This he at first refused, but finally yielded. Then, for a space they found refuge from the anger of Finn in the Forest of Dooris. Time, however, apparently healed Finn's wrath, and it was many years afterwards when Diarmuid died, killed by a wild-boar of magic origin. Then Aengus, who had fostered Diarmuid, bore the dead man's body back to Brugh, promising to restore it to a semblance of life. Several versions are given of Grainne's subsequent action, but the writer has here chosen the kindlier one.

DEIRDRE.—Of Deirdre, a child of great beauty, it was prophesied at her birth, she would be the cause of great disasters. To save her from this destiny, King Conchubar had her reared in extreme solitude, with the intention of making

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

her his Queen. She, however, meeting in early girlhood, Naoise (Nay-sha), a distinguished warrior of the Red Branch Knighthood, wed, and fled with him, and his two brothers, Ardan and Ainle to Scotland. Thence, at the end of seven years they returned to Ireland, at the invitation of Conchubar. The invitation was but a death-trap to the three brothers. Versions as to Deirdre's ending vary, but all are highly tragic. In "Deirdre to her Women," the writer has chosen that form of the story, which tells that Deirdre, after the death of Naoise, lived as the bride of Conchubar for the space of a twelvemonth; and, at the end of that time, terminated her sorrows, by leaping from Conchubar's chariot, on a day when the King was driving it at its utmost speed. Many have found it difficult to reconcile this story of treachery and death with the otherwise very noble and lofty attributes of Conchubar's character.

EMAIN MACHA.—The palace of the Ulster Kings.

EMER.—The heroic and beautiful wife of Cuchulain. She died on beholding the slain body of her lord, and was buried in the one grave with him.

ETAIN.—The half-fairy wife of Eochy, High-King of Ireland. She was the object of a prolonged strife between the latter, and Midair, King of Fairyland, in which the mortal king was finally the victor. Irish legend is rich in descriptions of her beauty.

MYTHOLOGICAL INDEX

FIANNA.—The great body of trained fighting-men commanded by Finn McCool.

FIONN.—Finn McCool, who organized the Fianna in the reign of King Cormac McArt, to protect Ireland, and who, to great gifts of valor and beauty, added that of poetry.

FINOVAR.—"Findabair of the Fair Eyelids," the beautiful daughter of Queen Maeve of Connacht, to win whose hand in marriage, Ferdia, the boyhood friend of Cuchulain, fought with the latter, and was unwillingly slain by the Ulster champion. Held up as a sort of marriage trophy by her warrior-mother to the princes whom she sought to win to her standard, Findabair perished in the flower of her girlhood. The poem in the present volume was suggested by one of John P. Campbell's pictures, as were also the two poems, "Saba comes to Finn," and "The Coming of Finn."

LUGH.—The supreme sun-god of the Celts.

MAEVE.—The great war-queen of Connacht, the untiring foe of Ulster, is described as a woman of commanding loveliness. While there is no legendary origin for a "Greek Lover of Maeve," the romance is within the possibilities.

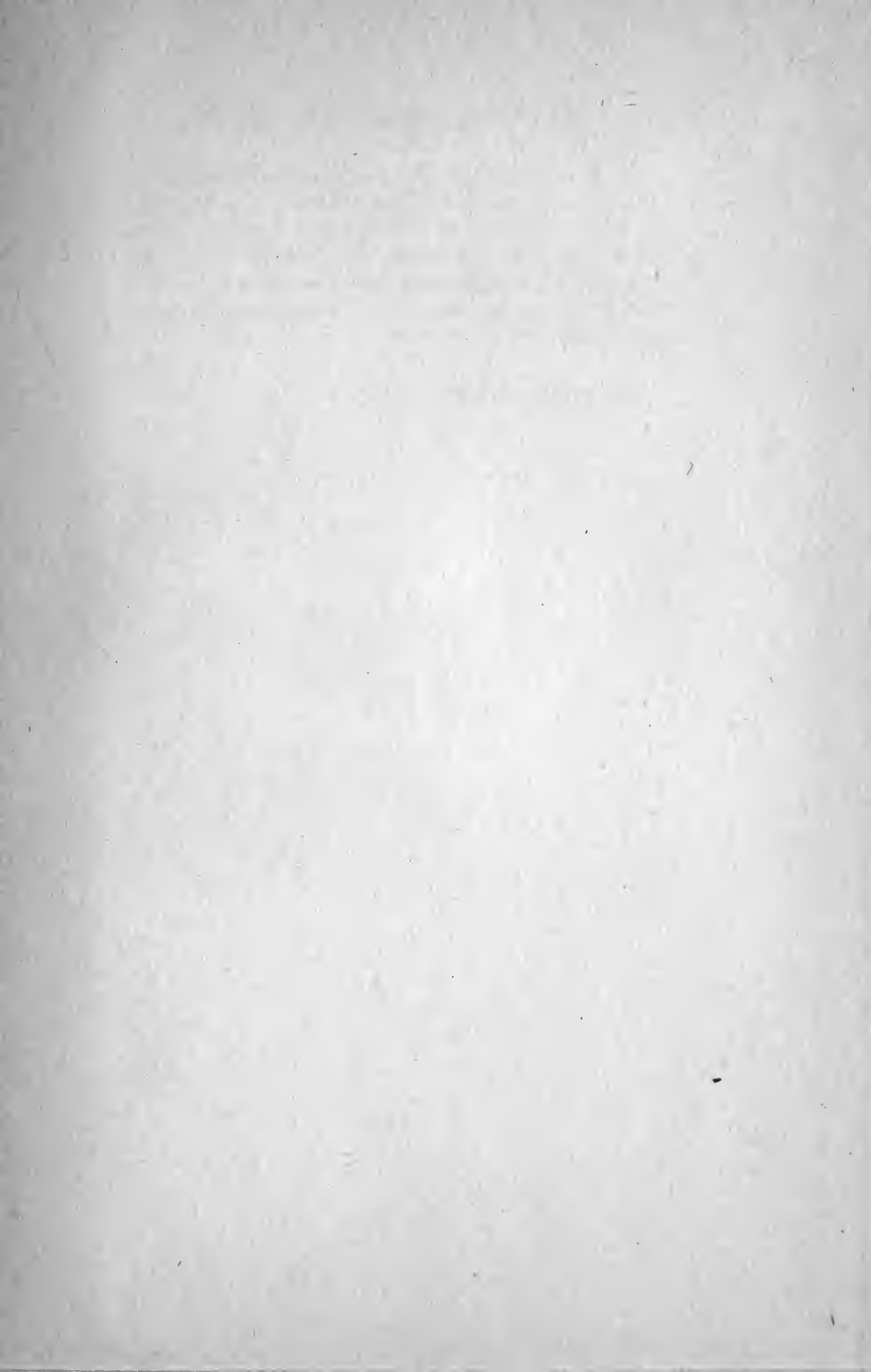
MANANNAN.—The Celtic god of Ocean, lord of the Isles of the Happy Dead, protector of Erin.

MURIAS.—One of the four magic cities from which the De Danaans are said to have originally come.

SINGING FIRES OF ERIN

SABA.—Irish legend tells no more wistful story than that of this woodland maiden, who came for a little while to be the mortal bride of Finn McCool, and was later, through Druidical enchantment, transformed into the appearance of a fawn. From her union with Finn sprang Ossian, Ireland's first great poet.

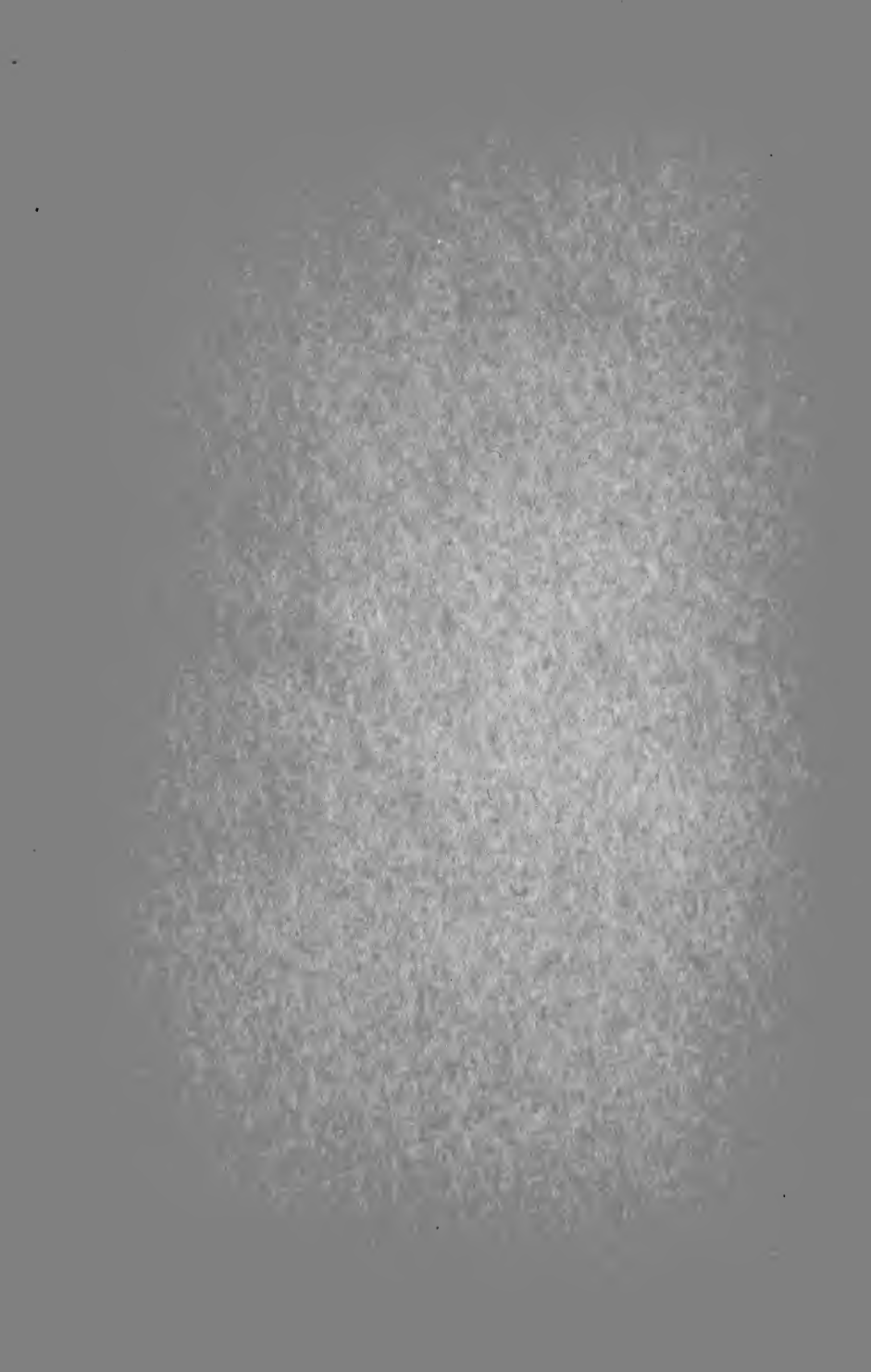
ULAI DH.—Ulster.



Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Sept. 2009

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 905 022 1